

Article

Philosophy and ethics: towards establishing bioethical education¹

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Abstract

Ethics is no longer limited to a personal normative issue; it is now framed by internationally accepted, sometimes binding, social institutions and moral rules. This evolution, influenced by global scientific elites, highlights the emergence of a new moral and legal thinking aimed at universality similar to that of human rights. This study explores how some Arab and Algerian researchers, particularly through bioethics, address these ethical challenges. Is it possible to say with certainty that ethics has replaced morality? And does the transition from morality to ethics fall within the questions of forward-looking philosophy? The aim of the study: Is it possible to say with certainty that ethics has replaced morality? And does the transition from morality to ethics fall within the questions of forward-looking philosophy?

Keywords: Ethics, Bioethics, Values, Stakes, Transformation

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Introduction

The recent presence of philosophy in Algeria testifies to the emergence of significant efforts to strengthen philosophical and biotechnical education, and to further establish it in the country. These initiatives take various approaches to renew philosophical discourse, asking new questions and re-examining its history through translations and critical studies. They go beyond traditional topics to include areas such as training, image, architecture, music, gender, madness, friendship and peace, which have often been marginalized.

Interest in ethics and values is growing, especially in the context of our time marked by a "loss of meaning" and a "disappearance of common values". This period is also characterized by nihilism, liquidity and triviality, often exacerbated by media and social networks. These phenomena pose complex ethical challenges for decades to come, making values and ethics research a priority for universities and scientific research in Algeria.

Philosophy, by positioning itself in this field, confronts the biological sciences with the new question of ethics, particularly in connection with the contemporary scientific revolution marked by economic and political control, especially in the field of biotechnology. It is important to note that today's culture is marked by pluralism and relativity, which seems to be a dominant trend of the first decades of this century.

Ethics, by inspiring and preceding legal rules, is increasingly in demand, notably through the establishment of codes for various professions and activities. This need, explained by the philosopher Jill Lipovsky, responds to concerns raised by the growth of new authorities, whether technical, scientific, financial, media or political (Nora, 2019) Ethical issues become crucial in the relations between the doctor and his patient, the merchant and his client, as well as the journalist and the politician, stressing the importance of self-discipline in the professions to reach the widest possible consensus.

We read book titles like "How Anxiety Begins Life" or "How to Win and Dominate Others" 1, written by Dale Carnegie, an applied moral philosopher and American author known for his famous lessons on personal development. These



books are gaining in importance today, especially considering the profits they generate, which demonstrates the growing need for such books. However, interest in applied moral philosophy is not limited to book publishing. It has also become a subject taught in many corporate training courses, intended to train new employees and is considered an essential area of contemporary human resource management. As a result, demand for this discipline is increasing.

The nomenclature of applied ethics is now an ethical code, focusing on practical human behavior and applied ethics. This discipline, considered a branch of axiology or the study of values in philosophy, is often referred to as the science of human resource development. Topics covered include: 1 – Effective communication, 2 – Teamwork, 3 – Leadership skills, 4 – Programming human behavior, 5 – Professional writing methods, 6 – Presentation techniques, 7 – Project management, 8 – Creating and developing skills, 9 – Time management, 10 – Creative thinking, 11 – Emotional intelligence, 12 – Planning, 13 – Negotiation, 14 – Resume writing and personal performance, 15 – Customer service, 16 – Problem solving, 17 – Decision making, and 18 – Skills and sales methods. The priority is to put these skills into practice.

With this approach, ethics has become a universal concern, existing only in the plural, which underscores its growing diversity. All professions, activities and societies require ethical authority, not just ethical principles 2. To assess the situation of biological ethics in the Arab world, it is important to note the confusion between ethics and morals in the Arab heritage. In addition, research in biological ethics is almost non-existent, due to objective conditions often linked to the level of scientific and technological development. When the socio-political and cultural context is stagnant, knowledge production suffers, as is the case with biological ethics in the Arab world, where concepts and theories are underdeveloped.

This situation is not due to a linguistic deficit or a lack of intelligence among researchers, but rather to a state of current civilizational weakness. This is reflected in the absence of competent bodies and institutes, as well as in the poor performance of our universities, which are often ranked among the last in the



world. The almost total absence of legislation and laws in this area is also a factor. As a result, topics like nutrition, the environment, sexuality, and human rights have become focal points, but rarely with a philosophical approach or in terms of applied philosophy, which is popular and widely disseminated in the West 3.

2-The adoption of applied philosophy today:

Means that philosophies are seen as experimental laboratories. This is where guidelines for managing life are developed. "The school of philosophers is a medical clinic," according to Epictetus. Without an applied philosophy, the individual risks losing his vital momentum, repressing his instincts and destroying all that is beautiful in life (Tafroute, 2015).

This is due to "people's lack of knowledge about what is beneficial or harmful to them in the organization of their daily lives, such as time management, relationships with others, and the choice of their work or leisure companions. This also includes obedience to the senses evoked by nature and the sensations evoked by art, in areas such as food, sleep and reflection" (Tafroute, 2015).

Most philosophical efforts look to the future, wondering what works for the human being. It is a future-oriented question, a philosophy that seeks to chart a path and a vision for what is to come. For example, the question of the future of physics or artificial intelligence is a deeply philosophical one. This shows that philosophy is not disconnected from reality or the future; it tries to find the best path for the future.

Without political theory, political practice is useless. It must incorporate high human values; otherwise it will have no future. "He who has nothing more than life is in excess," they say. It is crucial to reflect on our current existence and what is happening in the world today, as this has a special meaning within the framework of philosophical thinking.

Let's go back to the biotic lesson, which addresses the ethical issues raised by medical and biological advances, as well as other related philosophical, legal, religious, economic, and environmental issues. Its main objective is to propose



ethical principles to regulate the practice of physicians and professionals in the fields of medicine, biology and health. These principles go beyond the medical and biological framework to form a basis for reflection on the creation of a consensual moral and legal organization for scientific practice and research, as well as for all professional practices in general. They also aim to strengthen human rights, preserve the environment and protect against abuse by scientists and researchers. These principles concern issues of general interest, such as the preservation of human dignity, unity and identity, as well as the consideration of justice and equity, so that all members of society benefit from medical treatments and the benefits of scientific and technological advances in the medical and biological field. In addition, they respect the right of choice, autonomy and the right to self-determination with regard to life, death or self-determination in general.

3-Technological advances:

Especially in the life sciences (biology), confront us with difficult choices. Questions arise: Can we conduct experiments on people without their consent? How to manage human organ trafficking in the face of the growing possibility of organ transplantation? Is it ethical to end the lives of incurable people? Regarding infertility, pregnancy and procreation, can a woman bear a child for another woman? Is abortion of malformed children permitted? What are the limitations of interventions on the nervous system? What about embryo selection? What rights do embryos have over experiments conducted on them? Is it acceptable to select embryos without genetic defects? What are the consequences of the economic and racial exploitation of the human genome? How to reconcile the hopes and fears related to the discovery of "stem cells" and the risks to nature, human identity and dignity resulting from cloning? These questions emerge from the scientific and technological advances we see today.

In this context, we observe preliminary writings in the political and moral philosophy of Dr. Abdullah Shareeb, as in his book "The Moral Thought of Ibn Khaldun" (1975). He stood out among all the teachers of the first generation by



the richness of his production and his connection with the challenges of Algerian society. His speech was marked by direct communication with everyday life. In his book "Philosophical Writings," Dr. Bukhari Hamana addresses the issue of "Ethics and Scientific Challenges (The Case of Biology)" (Hamana, 2013) It deals with the various ethical challenges posed by the rapid advances in biology, particularly in the field of biotechnology. While these advances offer immense potential, they also threaten the essence of humanity and life. Hamana warns of the dangers of scientism, which absolutizes science by ignoring moral values. He also criticizes the commercialization of biotechnology, which could lead to eugenic drifts 5 and the commodification of organisms. Hamana proposes the establishment of effective bioethical conditions, such as the distinction between scientific truth and moral opinion, as well as the importance of reliable scientific references. Bioethics is essential for reconciling scientific progress and human values, thus ensuring responsible scientific development that respects humanity. Research interests and projects have crystallized over the past two decades, as evidenced by the increase in philosophy departments in many Algerian universities and the growing number of students and researchers in this field. This evolution has led to an increase in philosophical productions of value, both in Western and Arab thought.

We refer here to academic research, philosophical projects and scientific articles in the new fields of ethics, written by a group of second- and third-generation Arab scholars and researchers. Among them, we can mention (Yamina, 2023).

4-Moral Philosophy Project and Related Projects in Applied Ethics:

The project "Moral Philosophy" is interested in the question of meaning and the dilemmas of actio (samir & zaroukhi) n. In 2013, the owner Belkvivsmir launched this project.

Subsequently, in 2014, Aboud Al-Muhammadawi Ali introduced the project "Biotechnology and the Philosophical Mission", focusing on "The Ethics of Biology and the Challenges of Technology".

In 2015, Zetili Khadija discussed "current values and contexts of science" as part of the "Applied Ethics" project.

Mustafa Kahl continued this work in 2016 with the project "Applied Ethics and Contemporary Betting of Philosophical Thought".

Finally, our project "Applied ethics - From etiquette to bioethics" was carried out in 2016/2017.

We would also like to commend the efforts of Mohamed Jedidi, professor, academic and translator, who is a prominent Algerian researcher in the field of bioethics in Algerian and Arab philosophical thought. His interest in the history of philosophy, especially Greek, and his work on bioethics, in collaboration with the late Moroccan researcher Omerboftas, are notable. Together, they have made a significant contribution to Arab bioethics research (Boughutas, 2011).

Mohamed Jedidi's interest in biotechnology is reflected in his many scientific works. It advocates for expanded biotechnology, highlighting global environmental issues and the importance of basing science and technology on new ethical values, based on responsibility and respect for human dignity 6 Among his contributions is the translation of Guederán's book "Biotechnology: Nature, Principles, Challenges". He points out that the time has come to take bioethics out of the academic framework and into broader social and political debates, making the discipline accessible to the public and relevant to discussions on health policies, the exploitation of energy resources, and other crucial societal issues (Kihal, ,2021).

Thus, despite the strong interest of many Algerian and Arab researchers in biotechnological issues and their implications, Mohamed Jedidi's work stands out for its pioneering character and quality. His studies, translations and university theses, which he supervised, represent a valuable contribution, worthy of recognition and further study (Yamina, 2023, p. 98).

In the end, philosophy gained a lot through biotic thinking. It allowed for an in-depth exploration of important philosophical issues, such as identity, life, death, existence, destiny, and relationships with others. These issues are of interest to all social groups, not just specialists. The aim is to overcome obstacles

to the development of scientific research, especially in the fields of health and life sciences. These areas seek to improve human living conditions and alleviate suffering. It is therefore essential to remain optimistic and believe that the future of ethics and philosophy depends on our ability to renew and actualize the concepts of reason, modernity, democracy, pluralism, relativity, and ethics. Ethics is no longer just a matter of personal conscience; it has become a social and even international norm, sometimes binding, with the force of law. This is what is meant by "transition from morality to law", where ethics go beyond the individual to become a norm accepted by social institutions and global scientific or intellectual elites, often referred to as "committees of the wise". These ethical committees confront us today with a new moral and legal reflection that tends towards universality, similar to that of human rights (Russ, 1995).

Thus, we emphasize that the main challenge for philosophy today is related to Bioethics, in response to current philosophical questions and problems that influence the new human reality at various levels: political, moral, aesthetic, literary, scientific and philosophical. Sensitive issues like euthanasia, organ transplantation, eugenics, genome editing, and environmental pollution underscore the importance of Piwateca today. However, this multiple experiment requires continuous monitoring and practical testing to prove its value and rights, while guiding modern humanity and protecting it from the secondary complications of techno-scientific civilization.

5-We must pay attention:

to what justifies the need for philosophical thinking today (Tafroute, 2015) We do not believe that the role of the philosopher today, or in the near future, will be limited to the search and pursuit of truth through reflection, dialogue and questions. Rather, we believe that these will be ongoing attempts to understand and assimilate the major transformations and implications of advances in scientific research on a global scale, as well as their effects on the human condition. This includes reformulating and establishing new concepts to help illuminate and raise awareness of the values of the new human wisdom.



Can it be definitively affirmed that ethics has replaced morality? Is the transition from morality to ethics part of the questions of prospective philosophy?

- Carnegie, D. (1888-1955). (November 24, 1888 near Missouri - November 1, 1955 in Forest Hills, New York). Author and developer of famous lessons such as "How to deal with people"..."Stop worrying and start living" "How to Win Friends and Influence People.
- If we need to differentiate between ethics and morals today, we can say that ethics are based on the logic of "how things should be," built on universal values that transcend time and space, making them normative. Morals, on the other hand, are based on the logic of "how things can or should be," characterized by specificity and local or group nature, striving to embody what is appropriate or suitable in a specific context. Hence, morals are an individual voluntary commitment, while ethics are a collective voluntary choice with a practical nature, reflecting a tangible sense of social responsibilities.
- It is true that in the history of philosophy—from the Greeks to today—we encounter references to various topics considered part of applied philosophy. We also find this application in the works of major philosophers known for their theoretical approach. For example, amusement and entertainment in Pascal, cunning of reason in Hegel, bringing philosophy from heaven to earth in Marx, or the lifeworld in Husserl.
- Among the works of Dr. Abdullah Shreit: Al-Fikr Al-Akhlaqi 'Inda Ibn Khaldun [Ethical Thought in Ibn Khaldun] (1975), Min Waqi' Al-Thaqafa Al-Jaza'iriya [From the Reality of Algerian Culture] (1981), Ma'rakat Al-Mafahim [The Battle of Concepts], Al-Mushkila Al-Idiyulujia wa Qadaya Al-Tanmiyya [The Ideological Problem and Development Issues] (1981), and other various studies, especially his translation of many journalistic texts compiled in two large volumes titled: Al-Thawra Al-Jaza'iriya fi Al-Sihafa Al-Duvaliya [The Algerian Revolution in International Press] (1955 and 1956).
- Physiognomy: The History of Physiognomy: Physiognomy among Arabs (a natural science by which the inner morals and natures of people are known by looking at their external conditions such as colors, shapes, and organs, or it is the



inference of inner character from outer appearance). The meaning of the word is the knowledge of the body, and it is the name of a quasi-scientific field or the art of reading and deducing personality components just by studying the external appearance of the body, especially the face.

- The interest of researcher and translator "Mohamed Jadidi" in bioethics dates back to the beginning of the new millennium. His first contribution in this field was his presentation at the international conference "Philosophy and Contemporary Issues" held in April 2007 at the Algerian National Library, titled "Bioethics and the Challenges of Future Philosophy," where he stated that it is not an exaggeration to say that bioethics is one of the future challenges of philosophy, even if this statement appears to be a prediction that outlines the topics of philosophy currently and in the future.

6-Conclusion

Today, the main challenge of philosophy has become the challenge of bioethics, due to the current philosophical issues and problems that cast their shadows on the new human reality at its various political, moral, aesthetic, literary, scientific and philosophical levels, which constitutes a current challenge to contemporary philosophical thought, as new features are characterized by an accelerating movement that reaches the point of revolutionizing prevailing norms, concepts and perceptions. Perhaps sensitive issues such as euthanasia, organ transplantation, improving the population, modifying the genome, environmental pollution, and other issues.

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